




Begin eating as you mean to go on.



Chaz
 [cvillette](https://cvillette.livejournal.com/)

<https://cvillette.livejournal.com/>
2007-12-31 17:38:00

MOOD: 😊 content

MUSIC: nervously humming "Hail to the Chief"

So you stayed up late to watch the ball drop, to drink champagne, to count down.

Did you remember the food?

New Year's Day has food tradition like you wouldn't believe, on every continent (though, of course, not on the same date). All of them are symbolic of long life and prosperity.

What, did you think people were going to do sympathetic magic to summon drought and boils?

In Japan, people eat soba noodles. Not only are they comfort food (yum), but they're long, and if you can suck up an extra-long one without breaking it, you'll have a long life.

In Spain, they eat twelve grapes at midnight, one for each month, in thanks for a good harvest and in hope of another. The hitch is that you have to eat a grape with each stroke of the clock. Can you eat a grape in a second? Go for those little champagne grapes. *g*

In the Netherlands, they eat doughnuts; ring-shaped food symbolizes the circle of the year. Besides, hey, doughnuts. Mmmmm.

In Italy, people make a dish called cotechino con lenticchie--pork sausage with lentils. Pork = prosperity in almost every country that raises pigs, and lentils look like little coins. That's another common symbolism, by the way--anything that looks like paper money, or coins, or purses: a wish for good fortune in the New Year!

In Greece, in fact, you can lose a crown on the symbolism. They

make vasilopita, a cake with a coin baked inside (it's in honor of a miraculous redistribution of wealth on the part of St. Basil, who was the local equivalent of the IRS at the time, I guess). Whoever gets the piece with the coin gets the most mojo for the year.

Most cultures try to eat lavishly on New Year's Day. In Russia, the table should be FULL of dishes, the table crammed with food (oooh, I think I like the Russians...). Again, sympathetic magic: they're acting out the fortune they want for the coming 365.

But my favorite New Year's food comes from the American South. Some people say the theory there is, "Eat poor on New Year's Day, and you'll eat rich for the rest of the year." But OMG the poor-people food!

Hoppin' John is blackeyed peas and rice (peas for that coin thing again, and rice is always a symbol of abundance). But you can add *anything* to it. I simmer cubes of sweet potato in mine, and onions and garlic and oregano, and a roasted Anaheim or other long green pepper. I might also grind up a dry red pepper or two, throw in some cumin--I make southwestern southern food. But you can do anything with this dish. Put in a hambone, or cubed ham, or bacon. Cook the peas in that stock that's in the freezer, or brown ale, or bought stock or even water and a couple decent boullion cubes; Hoppin' John forgives much. Just don't cook it 'til it's mushy. The peas and the rice should have some toothiness to 'em.

Southern greens are traditional, too. Your East Texas grandma would make boiled greens, which are good, but here's what I do: Get a huge wok, and I mean huge, because the volume of greens is initially daunting. Rinse, shake off, and chop up leaves of mustard greens, collard greens, and kale. (You'll find 'em bunched in the produce section of the supermarket. Use a whole bunch of each. Really.) You want pieces about the size of your first two fingers side by side.

(Trader Joe's stores have kindly offered ready-chopped and washed bags of appropriate mixed greens in their bagged salad section for several years now. This is a good idea. If you have a Trader Joe's, buy the bag.)

Slice a lot of garlic cloves into thin cross-section slices. A *lot*. At least six big ones. More if you like garlic.

Heat two tablespoons of more-or-less flavorless oil in the bottom

of your wok. That would be peanut or canola, which also don't burn at anything but very high temps, so they're good for stir-frying. Heat the oil until it behaves like water rather than oil when you tip the wok--try it and you'll see what I mean. Don't let it smoke. Coat the sides of the wok with hot oil and throw in the sliced garlic.

When it gets soft and starts to turn yellow, start adding greens. Vast amounts of greens. Keep adding, and keep stirring and tossing. As you cook the chopped greens, they wilt down and make more room for their friends back there on the cutting board. Also, you keep tossing to keep the garlic from burning in the oil at the bottom of the wok. It might get a little browned, but that's all right--caramelized garlic! Mmmm!

As soon as all the greens are in, add a dollop of good sesame oil. Toasted sesame oil, the dark stuff, burns too quickly to cook with, but it's a great flavoring ingredient. How much is a dollop? Depends on how much green leafy stuff you've got. Could be as much as a tablespoon. Add it, toss it in with everything, and smell. Does it smell nutty and wunnerful? Then that's enough.

You've already got the rice cooked and put in bowls. The blackeyed peas get ladled over that (unless you did a version in which you cook the rice and peas in the same pot). Then the nice hot greens go on a plate beside...

...the cornbread. Because you have to have corn. Corn is the North American equivalent of rice, because it always means prosperity. Any corn bread, corn muffin, corn biscuit recipe will do, but always use stone-ground cornmeal, because the texture is happy-making.

Poor folks' New Year's Day dinner. But doesn't it make you think about what real wealth is? Tasty, filling food you make yourself, and maybe even get to serve to friends. That's my idea of rich.

Happy New Year, all. Be kind to people, and enjoy every sandwich.



[locked] Dream Journal

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

Elvis doesn't live here anymore.

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

Poppets. Puppets. Poppet puppets. Scary.

47 comments



 trollcatz

January 1 2008, 01:11:28 UTC COLLAPSE

You, ah, want some company tomorrow? I don't just ask that because I like your cooking, mind you, and so does Tricia.

(I also ask it because I want to know if you get to meet anybody famous tonight.)



 cvillette

January 1 2008, 01:18:27 UTC COLLAPSE

I hereby issue a proper invitation to you, T., and Wabbit to eat Food of Good Fortune at my place.

And to torment me mercilessly for gossip.

Good grief, if I do meet anyone famous, how would I *know*?

Someone please bring beer or wine or something. I think I'm going to need it.



 trollcatz

January 1 2008, 01:22:46 UTC COLLAPSE

If they look familiar, but you have an uneasy sensation that you are used to seeing them register lines across their face, they are probably Somebody.

Invitation totally accepted. Shall I bring the space warp?



 trollcatz

January 1 2008, 01:26:43 UTC COLLAPSE

with register lines. D'oh.

Have some more champagne, Daphs.



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:13:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

IT'S NOT THAT SMALL!

Oh, okay, bring the space warp. Then we can play badminton.



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:16:01 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

You are NOT texting from the fancy party. You will not impress Tasha by ducking behind the potted plants with the adorable overhyped phone.

(Is it a fancy party? OMG. How does your hair look? Is Robert Redford there? I have comfy couch and comfy girl. Best NYE ever.)



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:17:24 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Am 2.

& I totally met somebody famous.

Not Robert Redford.

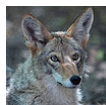
(Would trade in a heartbeat for a comfy couch and a comfy girl.)



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:28:15 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

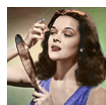
You're not going to tell me anything, are you? :-P



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:29:46 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My hair looks fabulous?



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:12:34 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

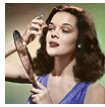
product, baby, product. pert plus will not work miracles.



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:13:43 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

What was the green stuff that smells like sex in a fruit salad?



[Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:16:02 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

<http://usa.lush.com/cgi-bin/lushdb/220?expand=Haircare:upd=y>

Happy new year, brat.

Why aren't you kissing the girl?



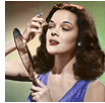
[cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:19:24 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Secret service interference.

Why aren't you kissing the boy?



[Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:28:14 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Even I can't do it for 27 minutes...

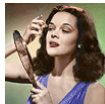


[trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:45:34 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

You are local expert--why is the Sekrit Servizz putting limits on kissing?



[Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:50:15 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

New rules. Current administration.



[trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:29:12 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Secret service wanted their turn?

(With you or with her?)



[cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:30:31 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

There were several....



[trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:43:52 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Turns?

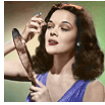
(I'm calling the Post! Martha Graham is coming back from the dead!)




 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:50:55 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Is my dignified silence working?



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:57:12 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

tap, tap

Is this thing off?




 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:59:04 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Sixty-six. Cincinnati. Sauerkraut.



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 15:07:56 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

(That's *Katherine* Graham. Good grief. And I didn't have that much champagne.)




 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 15:21:02 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Strawberries will get you every time.



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:27:10 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I would totally have sex in a fruit salad.

T put a strawberry in my champagne.



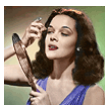
 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:29:56 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Blues Euphemism?

I would totally have sex in *this* fruit salad. Well-dressed Democrats keep sniffing me.

You can smell my hair tomorrow. I won't wash it when I shower. Though the lime styling stuff nearly killed the fruit salad smell.



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:35:18 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I will share mine with you until your order comes.

You also want this:


<http://usa.lush.com/cgi-bin/lushdb/02686?expand=Haircare>

and this:

<http://usa.lush.com/cgi-bin/lushdb/02690>

Yes, spendy. But it lasts half a year or more.

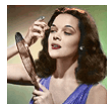


 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:47:24 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Woo, yum. My pay grade runs more to Suave green apple, unfortunately...



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:48:41 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Is worth it.

Besides, when they say you just poke your finger in it? They're not kidding. It lasts *months*.



 [trollcatz](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:50:16 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I think I'm off to bed. Ooop! Yep, definitely off to bed.

See you t'morra, keeds.

AFTER the Rose Parade.



 [cvillette](#)

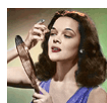
[January 1 2008, 05:51:54 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Silly harpy.

Me, I sleep late. Then I feed you good.

O, you coming?



 [Ometotchtli](#)

[January 1 2008, 06:02:57 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Assuredly, mon bro. Do we require traditional New Year's cheesecake?




 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 06:04:11 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Sis, absolutely.



 [hawkwing_lb](#)

[January 1 2008, 01:16:49 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Happy New Year!




 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:14:33 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

And to you! What are you eating?



 [hawkwing_lb](#)

[January 1 2008, 13:05:35 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)


Pork and pineapple stirfry, and chocolate.

Chocolate is always good.

Deleted comment



[Re: Happy new year!](#)

 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:23:04 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

Make! Easy!



 [arcaedia](#)

[January 1 2008, 03:49:01 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I agree. Celebrating with food is key.

My New Year's Eve dinner was Morimoto's "Angry Chicken" (from my brand new cookbook, *Morimoto: The New Art of Japanese Cooking*) - his rendition of tandoori chicken, marinated in spiced yogurt, in this case mixed with Frank's original hot sauce. I'll post the recipe on my blog once I get my office organized again post-holidays.

I'm capping off the evening with a personal molten chocolate cake:

<http://www.of2minds.org/spice/archives/001103.html>



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 04:20:02 UTC](#)

[COLLAPSE](#)

I get canapes. :-(

At least they're good canapes.

(Okay, also there was caviar. Nom nom nom. Hello, things that are out of my price range....)



 [beatriceeagle](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:56:22 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My house is a pork and sauerkraut house. This leads to a serious dilemma, because sauerkraut and I don't mix. So generally I eat one little strip to please my mother (*why* does her only superstition have to involve sauerkraut?) and eat bread and pork for the rest of dinner.

(Happy New Year!)



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 05:57:30 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

At least it doesn't involve liver and onions...



 [beatriceeagle](#)

[January 1 2008, 06:04:29 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

My mother doesn't eat liver. She knows way too much about what they do.

Plus, I've seen her diseased-liver model, and I don't think I could possibly swallow liver, now.



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 06:07:03 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

Yeah. Livers and kidneys: they taste nasty for a reason.

Deleted comment



 [beatriceeagle](#)

[January 1 2008, 06:08:11 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

We have lots of lentils, from making juggling balls. I wonder if I might be able to negotiate a trade...



 [cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 13:45:21 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I like lentils.

They make awesome soup. My mom used to make lentil soup sometimes; with carrots and--well, it's just like split pea soup, except, you know. Lentils.

 [matociguale](#)

[January 1 2008, 06:08:57 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

I subbed in lettuce tonight, because it was what I had.

Bread is bread.

Er, sort of.



[cvillette](#)

[January 1 2008, 13:49:26 UTC](#) [COLLAPSE](#)

This is that pagan improvisation thing I hear so much about, isn't it? "Well, if you don't have sea salt, use Morton's." ??

[locked] [Dream Journal](#)

All right, unconscious mind. We're coming to an accommodation. If the dreams are you cleaning

[Elvis doesn't live here anymore.](#)

Hey there. Sorry about the drama. It was... it was an emotional decision, and I didn't

[Poppets. Puppets. Poppet puppets. Scary.](#)